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Around the District

By Sen. Brian Schoenjahn

A special thanks to Elmer Marting of Monona for the invitation to the flight breakfast at the Monona airport. It has been a great summer to fly Iowa. There were a large number of fly-ins from across the state. We also stopped by the Manchester Airport Fly-in Drive-in. I enjoyed visiting with the pilots and local citizens. It is always a treat to view both the vintage and the new experimental aircraft. Maintaining our airports is good economic sense for both business and tourism.

Congratulations to LaPorte City on your Community Attraction and Tourism award for your Aquatic Center. The \$2.3-million project will be a real asset to the LaPorte community. The city of Edgewood also received a CAT grant for its Community Dreams Recreation Area. This \$740,000 project involves the construction of football/soccer, track and league ball fields, and bleachers.

We had a fun time at the Fayette Watermelon Days and Parade. We will be in McGregor this weekend for the parade and celebration. There are great things happening in our rural Iowa communities, which make them great places to live and raise a family.

Forum scheduled on recruiting mature workers

To help Iowa prepare for changing workforce demographics, the Department of Cultural Affairs solicited applications for a new program called Iowa Great Places. The initiative is designed to make good places great by cultivating the unique and authentic qualities that make Iowa's communities, regions, neighborhoods and districts special.

I know that a great quality of life is essential to our economic development, and folks across the state seem to agree. More than 145 Great Places applications poured in from 91 Iowa counties.

Currently, coaches are meeting with each applicant to create a Great Places Profile and develop an offer. Three places will be selected to become Iowa's pilot Great Places by October 1.

I'm really excited for the applicants in our area who applied to be a Great Place:

Clayton County, Elkader, Guttenberg, Iowa's Great River Road, LaPorte City's FFA Historical and Ag Museum, Motor Mill Town in Clayton County, Northeast Rural Communities Consortium, Strawberry Point, The Valley of Elgin, Wadena and Clermont, Twin Lakes of Calhoun County.

Organizations receive AmeriCorps grants

The Iowa commission on Volunteer Service granted \$1.7 million in AmeriCorps grants to 11 community organizations that will place 259 AmeriCorps volunteers across Iowa.

Congratulations to the Clayton, Buchanan and Black Hawk county recipients: Habitat for Humanity, Upper ExplorerLand, Keepers of the Land, and the Iowa Legal Aid Program.

Statewide, AmeriCorps is credited with tutoring and mentoring 5,431 students in K-12 and restoring and maintaining 140 miles of Iowa trails. In addition, 3,000 elderly Iowans received donated cell phones for emergency response.

New jobs, quality jobs for Iowans

As we look for ways to attract

and maintain jobs in Iowa, we must consider the types of jobs we want to attract. We must go after quality jobs that will bring more people into Iowa and keep younger Iowans in our state. We need companies that will take care of their workers and value their services.

In attracting jobs, we should appeal to companies that will meet their obligations to injured workers through the state's workers' compensation system. These benefits help families get by while the worker recovers and gets back to work. We should not remove the safety net of unemployment insurance. This helps families and communities stay afloat in the event of layoffs and plant closings while the workers search for new jobs.

State business leaders will participate in regional forums during September to examine ways mature workers can continue contributing to the state's economic health.

Each "Connect with Experience" meeting will highlight how businesses can recruit, train, and attract older workers, as well as bottom-line results that older workers have produced. Our local meeting will be held on September 21 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. in rooms A and B of Tama Hall at Hawkeye Community College.

The meetings are free and open to all. More information about the forums and on-line registration is available at: www.state.ia.us/elderaffairs/living/connectingwithexperience

Great Places abound in Iowa

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